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SAINT LOUIS BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

Official Organ of the Saint Louis Bird Club
for the Protection,
Enjoyment, Study, and Conservation of Birds

Volumn 5

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Number 3

BIRD WALK CALENDAR-MAY 1936

Methods of Attracting Birds

BELLEFONTAINE CEMETERY - Saturday,
May 2 and 9; 6 to 8 A.M.
This group, under the leadership of
Louis Weber, will start from the
Hawthorne Gate on Florissant Avenue.

SHAW'S GARDEN - Sunday, May 3 and
10; 8 to 10 A.M.
Brother Hubert Lewis of Christian Bro-
thers College will lead these walks.
Meet at the main entrance on Tower
Grove Avenue.

CREVE COEUR LAKE - Saturday, May 9.
This will be the annual spring bird
count for this region. Groups will
start from the parking area at the
lake at 6 and 8:30 A.M. Bring lunch.

In addition to these walks, club members
have been invited to the Spring Field Meet
of the Missouri Audubon Society at Marsh-
field on Saturday and Sunday, May 2-3 (see
page 14) and to a bird trip in the St. Al-
bans region, planned by the Webster Groves
Nature Study Society for Sunday, May 10.
Meet at St. Albans Station at 8 o'clock.

The St. Louis Bird Club feels fortunate
in having one of its newer members, Bro-
ther Hubert Lewis, as leader of the Shaw's
Garden groups which have been, for many
years, in charge of Mr. Robert Barrell.
Brother Hubert comes from Minnesota where
he has had many interesting associations
with Dr. Thomas S. Roberts, author of BIRDS
OF MINNESOTA.

Brother Hubert makes field trips into the
country with some of his students every
Saturday. He invites any boys and men who
would like to go on any of these walking
trips to call him at the college, CA 5824,
any evening after 6:30.

The first thing to be understood by
anyone who is interested in having birds
about his home is that no special study
of birds or extensive information about
their habits is necessary. It seems to be
a general idea that the art of attracting
birds to become permanent residents is
rather a special one; and that only those
knowing a great deal about bird-habits can
count upon succeeding.

Of the 1,000 or more varieties of birds
in North America, not more than 100 hole-
nesting birds and only about 30 species
are likely to use nesting boxes or colony
houses. But nature seems to provide ample
numbers in the varieties that are willing
to use our homes so that if we provide
houses the birds turn up to occupy them.

The martins, and to some extent tree
swallows, will occupy colony houses with a
number of rooms.

The bluebird, wren, chickadee, nuthatch,
tufted titmouse, crested fly-catcher, wood-
pecker, flicker, tree swallow, and others
are attracted by single roomnesting boxes.
If you have not particularly noted the dif-
ferent birds in your neighborhood, you may
think off-hand that few, if any, of the
species mentioned, come about home.

But on putting up a martin house or
several nesting boxes, you would no doubt
have the experience of hundreds of others,
the pleasant surprise of finding them soon
occupied.

You will find, too, that observation of
the habits of the particular individuals
that have occupied your houses is much more
interesting than the study of bird-life in
general, and very informative.

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SAINT LOUIS BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

(METHODS OF ATTRACTING BIRDS)

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AUDUBON SOCIETY SPRING FIELD MEET

The Audubon Society of Missouri will hold its Spring Field Meet at Camp Arrowhead, Marshfield, Mo., May 2-3 1936.

All members of the Saint Louis Bird Club are invited to attend.

Those attending are asked to register as soon as they arrive so bunking facilities may be arranged.

The program for Saturday afternoons will be field trips under the direction of Mr. A. H. Duvall. Supper just after sundown and Camp Fire Program at 7:30, Mr. Jones presiding. Introduction of guests by Miss Nellie Matlock, Bird Studies by Miss Adele Vaughn, Highway Census by Mr. G. E. Moore, Round-Robin Discussion, Dr. Rudolph Bennitt, Leader.

For Sunday, Mr. Duvall will lead sunrise bird hikes. Breakfast at 7:30-8:00. Free period till noon. 11:30-12:30 Dinner. 12:30 Business Meeting Mr. Jones presiding.

Camp Arrowhead is located six miles east of Marshfield, Mo.

The Camp furnishes shelter and beds but no linen or bedding.

Meals will be served at the rate of \$1.00 per person for supper, breakfast, and dinner. Single meals at 35 cents.

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Another method of increasing the number of birds about your home is to have a suitable bird bath. You will be surprised at the number of birds that will use it, and good fresh water for drinking will be relished at all times during the year. Suitable roosting and sheltering places can also be erected to a good advantage.

A feeding stand well supplied with feed at all times during the year will make many feathered friends for you, to be had throughout the year.

Fruit and seed bearing plants will also attract many birds. Some good trees and plants are the Juniper, Hackberry, Mulberry, Sassafras, Raspberry, Wild Cherry, Sumac, Holly, Wild-grape, Dogwood, Elderberry and many others.

The bluebird and robin may be the harbingers of spring, but the swallow is the harbinger of summer.

DO YOU WANT ANY OF THESE
AUDUBON BIRD LEAFLETS?

Members of the bird club who want to buy some of these four-page illustrated bird articles, without the inconvenience of sending to New York for them, may buy copies of the following subjects from the secretary, Elizabeth Golterman.

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Bittern | Loon |
| Least Bittern | Sora Rail |
| Cormorant | Green-Winged Teal |
| Ducks- | Least Tern |
| Canvasback | Crow |
| Mallard | Marsh Hawk |
| Pintail | Hummingbird |
| Shoveller | Kingfisher |
| Wood Duck | Meadowlark |
| Egret | Nuthatch |
| Canada Goose | Bob-white |
| Herring Gull | Calif. Quail |
| Green Heron | Starling |
| Red-winged Blackbird | |
| Yellow-headed " | |
| Woodcock | |

The leaflets cost 5¢ each and may be bought during the next month from the secretary at 3325 Bell Avenue, JE 1587.

THE QUAIL AND HIS ENEMIES

The question frequently asked is "How can a lover of birds hunt and kill quail?" This can obviously enough be answered as the same reason that a lover of chickens will kill and eat them.

If quail were not intended as an article of food, surely, the good Lord would not have made several species of hawks, one kind of owl, the house cat, a number of varmints, and reptiles to hunt and eat them.

They have been paraded as the bird that will eat boll weevil and chinch bugs.

Several years ago the U.S. Biological Dept. examined the crops of over 1200 male quail ordered killed in various sections, especially those infected by these pests. In one instance only was it thought that one wing looked like the wing of a chinch bug.

It is stated that the quail is an insectivorous bird. He is, the same as the barnyard owl and all bird life, especially during the egg laying period. Although beneficial in eating the seed of obnoxious weeds, let it be observed that in many cases these seeds pass on through them and prove a detriment in orchards, meadows, grain fields, etc.

The sharp shinned hawk will destroy many more quail than the average hunter. The house cat that strays from home is worse than the weasel, fox or skunk. Several species of snakes are bad on quail eggs and on baby quail; same with the crow.

A sportsman will pass up a shot at quail to destroy hawks and varmints. He is also profuse in furnishing grain or seed to his country friends to provide food for quail when badly needed, during deep snow and sleet.

The enemies of quail by a close observer can be classified;

- 1st The elements—snow and sleet
- 2nd Crows, some hawks, horned owl
- 3rd Hunting house cat
- 4th Varmints, weasel, fox, skunk, possum
- 5th Snakes and hogs eating quail eggs

6th The Hunter

7th The cock quail

For some unknown reason in reach covey of quail there is generally more cocks than hens.

When mating season is on, the hen does the courting and selects her mate. Hence, the cock bird that has no mate proceeds to the nest of other quails and destroys them. A discussion along these lines on a duck hunting trip with W.C. Reel, Weiner, Ark. caused him to observe and investigate this the next spring.

He found quail nests on the slopes of a dyke in rice fields, where a hollow had been scratched out, and noted that these nests had been destroyed.

To learn the cause, he hid in a blind and detected cock quail fighting on the levee in the vicinity of a quail and acting suspicious. After the cock went down the side of the levee and flew away, he found a quail nest destroyed. After several of these suspicious acting cocks were killed with a .22 rifle, the nests were no longer molested.

F. H. Wieland
Former State Game and
Fish Commissioner.

LITERATURE

Bird Banding - A Journal of Ornithological Investigation. Published for The Northeastern Bird-Banding Association, The Eastern Bird-Banding Association, and The Inland Bird-Banding Association Continuation of the Bulletin of the Northeastern Bird-Banding Association. Charles L. Whittle, Editor, River Crossroads, Peterboro, New Hampshire; Charles B. Floyd, Treasurer, 95 South Street, Boston, Mass. Subscription price, \$2.00 per year, issued quarterly.

Bird-Banding is crowded with intimate studies in ornithology, of deep interest to all students in the entire field, even if created by and for bird banders. The fact that the Biological Survey is now publishing some of its official (continued on page 16)

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records in this Journal merits the more particular attention of our St. Louis Bird Club members. Notes should be sent to the editor; subscriptions to the treasurer. Why not add this Journal now to your personal library, and also influence your neighborhood Public Library to place it on the reference shelf?

A.F.S.

Bird Flight

By Gordon C. Aymer

Over two hundred magnificent photographs--many full-page--of different species, striking, informative, significant, together with explanatory captions and a number of diagrams, make this primarily a photographic picture book of birds actually in flight. It is more than a picture book, however, for it is divided into four main sections, the evolution of flight in birds, tracing their ancestry back to reptiles, their biology, the living machinery by means of which the bird flies, migration and that peculiar "sixth sense" of direction; and the aerodynamics of flight, a non-technical discussion of the way a bird propels himself through the air or soars on practically motionless wings. In addition to showing the different types of flight, the book will be extremely useful as a means of recognizing various species as they appear on the wing -- quite a different matter from seeing and identifying them while they are at rest. Price \$4.00.

"From 'Bird Flight' I have learned more about the flying bird than I have otherwise gathered during fifty years of ornithological work in the field. If a man can have only ten books in his ornithological library, one of these should be BIRD FLIGHT."

-T. Gilbert Pearson, President Emeritus, Nat'l Association of Audubon Soc.

Bird Migration

"The Migration North American Birds", by Frederick C. Lincoln (Cir. 363, U. S. Department of Agricul-

Testing Houses

Martin houses should be put up ready for use during the last week of March if in a new locality, but in communities where the birds are already established a month later will do. The immature birds, which are driven from the crowded home box, seek new quarters late in May and some times as late as June.

At no time during the summer months is it too late to erect a martin house, for non-breeding birds wandering over new territory will settle upon any new house they chance to find and live in it temporarily until the migration season begins. These birds usually return to such new houses the next year to build.

* * *

Riplettes

The Harpy Eagles have the strongest feet and toes of their kind in the world.

The vane of a wing feather from the pigeon has 1200 barbs and over 990,000 barbules.

The Pine Warbler has the shortest migration range of any of the warblers. The Blackpoll has the longest.

One of the most remarkable vocal performances among the warblers is the Ovenbird's flight song.

There are twice as many neckbones in the sparrow as in the giraffe, 14 vs. 7. There are 23 neckbones in the swan.

The acme of warbler activity is reached in the Redstart.

The mound-builder birds of Australia pass their entire first moult within the egg and are covered with fully developed flight quills when they emerge from the shell.

A bird can move its upper jaw independent of the rest of the head. This is more pronounced in the parrots than in any other group of birds.

A. M.

* * *

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(Literature)

ture, Oct. 1935 - obtainable from the Supt. of Documents for 10¢) (describes theories of migration, the movements of many species with maps) - their routes, winter and summer ranges, and dates. - and the many problems connected with migration. Every bird student should send for a copy.

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The beautiful and diversified scenery along many of our country roads attract tourists and pleasure seekers... and many people avail themselves of every opportunity to ride in the country, in many cases spending the entire day along our country roads.

Without any malicious intent these people are many times the cause of disastrous fires which take their toll of damage from our forests. Cigarette and cigar butts and matches cast aside while still burning are a prolific source of forest fires, while camp fires left without having been thoroughly extinguished contribute their quota to the cause.

The Value of Birds

Probably few people understand the value of birds or comprehend how extensively their lives are inter-woven with other forms of life. The general sentiment in regard to them, at best, has been that they are harmless, even interesting and beautiful creatures; but the idea that they are one of the most important classes of creation, a class upon which the existence of many other classes depends, has never been widely prevalent.

Suppose we were asked which is of more use to men -- the fishes of our waters or the birds of our forests and fields. Many of us would unhesitatingly answer in favor of the fishes.

If all of these denizens of the rivers, lakes and seas should be destroyed, it would be a tremendous calamity. Mankind would universally deplore it... and if the nations of the world should at any time become convinced that such a thing might

occur, how quickly they would take all possible means to prevent it. All civilized people have laws to preserve this food supply and are making extensive and laborious efforts to increase them. Anyone who should destroy thousands of tons of these edible swimmers simply for their heads and tails, or fins or scales, would be regarded as a dangerous person---but if our supposition were realized..if every fin and gill were to disappear from the waters of the globe...what would be the result? A misfortune, truly, for the fish represent a large part of the world's supply of food--and this loss would be felt more deeply as time went on, because the ocean will not raise its rent, however crowded may be the population of its shores. The effort to secure the fish might be applied, however, in other directions, and be equally remunerative.

Harvest would still follow seed-time, the gold of autumn still rewards their shallow minds of spring---but suppose we were forced to the dreadful alternative of choosing between the birds and the quadrupeds. Again the most of us would probably decide against the birds. If the four-footed beasts should disappear from the earth, it would be a much greater disaster than the destruction of the fishes. A much larger fraction of the food supply would be lost, while many of these animals contribute to man's comfort and necessities, in almost innumerable ways. Most nations have learned to cherish their friends with hoofs and horns, and even some of those with claws.

By the destruction of the quadrupeds, the life of man would be rendered much more difficult but would still be possible. From fishes and fowl he could attain a supply of meat limited in variety yet sufficient for his needs. The treasures of the vegetable world would still be his though he would miss the help of his animal

(The Value of Birds)

allies in securing them, but his ingenuity would help him to supply this loss in part at least.

Consider now what would be the effect of the total destruction of birds. Birds are Nature's check to the amazing power of insects to increase. If insect life were allowed free course, it would soon overpower vegetation and plant life, and therefore animal life, including that of man, would be impossible upon this globe. This is an established conclusion, but it is sustained by the judgment of every man of science who has investigated the subject.

How long could the ravages of insects be stayed were the birds gone? We should have to depend on a few predaceous beetles, the bats and upon the sprayers and squirt guns which throw insecticides. Think of the aesthetic loss in substituting these agencies for the "sweet spirits" of the woods and field. Besides not being musical or charming in action, they would not prove efficient. Birds are, therefore, essential to the life of man.

Their preservation is not merely a matter of sentiment or of education in that high and fine feeling -- kindness to all living things. It has a utilitarian value of vast extent, as broad as our boundless fields and orchards sweep. The birds are Nature's guarantee that the reign of the crawlers and spinners shall not become universal.

* * *

Intelligence Test

Question

Do you pick up after your picnic?

Answer

If you do, it shows that you are exceptionally intelligent, and have a real love of beauty.

* * *

Test yourself and your friends.

* * *

Help Save the Trees and the Wild Flowers.

Help Keep the Highways Beautiful.

Pick up your Picnic Rubbish.

Put out your fire; then bury it.

(Audubon Society Meet)

Persons who wish to do so may bring their own food and cook it over an open fire. The cabins are not equipped for cooking but plenty of wood is furnished for fires.

The camp has many cabins that will accommodate from two to nine persons.

Those planning to attend are asked to let Mr. G. E. Moore, Lebanon, Mo. or Mr. R. Voris, Teachers College, Springfield, Mo., know as soon as possible.

* * *

The average person, asked what is the natural food of hawks, will reply, "chickens and song birds."

Asked what the natural food of the house cat, he will reply, "mice and rats." If you stop a stranger in the street and ask him what Woodpeckers do for a living, he will answer (provided he doesn't take you for a lunatic), "they kill trees."

* * *

Hawks and owls live chiefly upon mice.

Woodpeckers eat the insects that kill the trees.

Turn a house cat into the woods or fields and in nineteen cases out of twenty (that is the proportion actually revealed by naturalists) the cat will live on birds rather than on mice.

* * *

In some of the cities, P.W.A. workers' time might well be spent building some bird houses and shelters and erecting them in the parks instead of cutting all thickets where the birds nest and roost.

Wouldn't several colonies of Purple Martins be wonderful to have in each park?

Several large cities have placed martin houses in their parks, and none has ever regretted it.

A Bird Day, just as we have an Arbor Day would be fine for our city. Bird houses could be erected and roosts and shelters established, and feeding stands for use in winter could also be put up.